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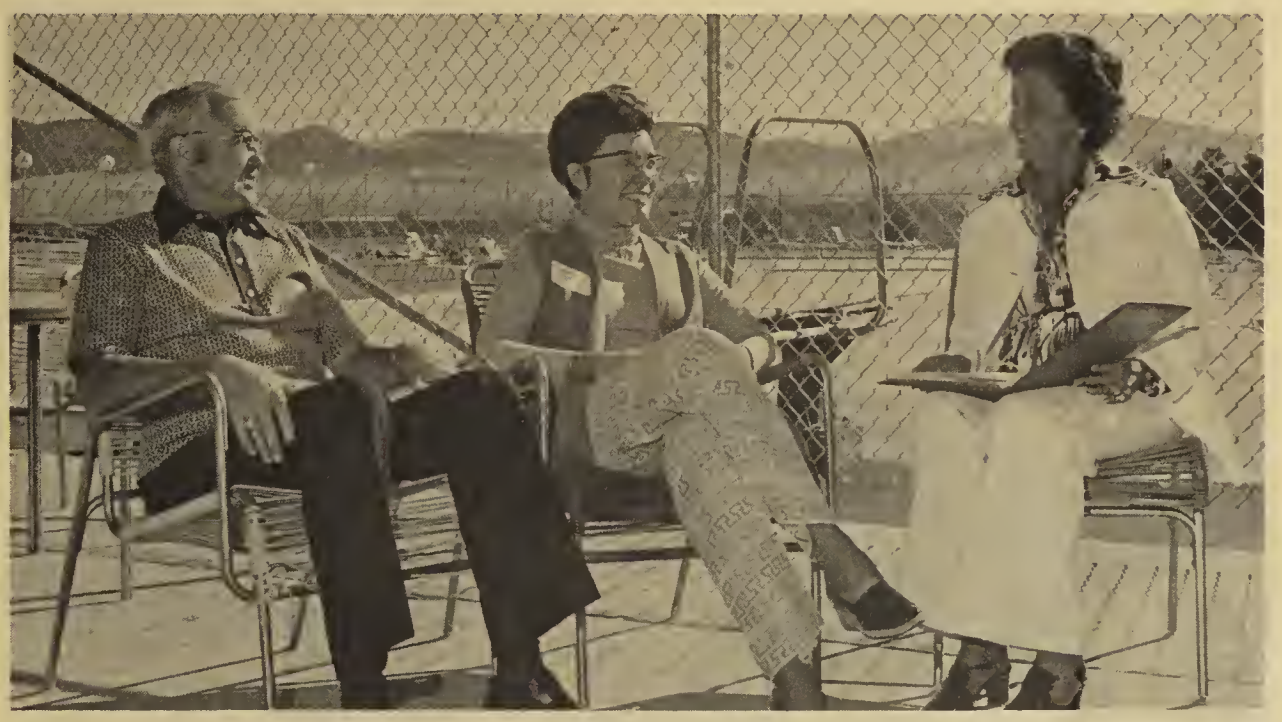
TRAVEL NEWS
MONTANA
TRAVEL PROMOTION UNIT, DEPT. OF HIGHWAYS, HELENA, MONTANA 59601 - VOL. 3, NO. 3, 1976

PNTA CONFERENCE HELD IN MONTANA

The 42nd annual Fall Travel Conference of the Pacific Northwest Travel Association met early in September at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort at Gregson.

Coordinated by conference chairman Carl Rupp of Billings, president of the Montana Chapter of PNTA, the annual meeting featured banquet addresses by Al Donohue, speaking on the need for travel, and William E. Toohey, President of Discover America Travel Organizations, speaking on "Federal Initiatives and Tourism."

Donohue, vice president of the Old West Trail Foundation and president of the Heritage Inn, Great Falls, and the Montana Innkeepers Association and owner of radio stations KMON and KNUW, both in Great Falls, spoke at the September 9 banquet. Paul Niskanen, vice chairman of the PNTA Board and president of Tour Marketing in Portland, presided.



ENJOYING THE MONTANA SUN at Fairmont Hot Springs while going over PNTA plans were (L to R) Victor Fryer, Oregon Travel Director; Josephine Brooker, Director of the Montana Travel Promotion Unit; and Florence Clifford, PNTA Board Chairman who also represented Idaho Travel Director Lloyd Howe. Not pictured is Bill Shaw, Washington Travel Director.

COORDINATORS OF THE PNTA conference were Bill Rupp (L), and Host Allan Saylor, manager of the Butte Chamber of Commerce. Not pictured is Diane McCorkle, manager of the Anaconda Chamber of Commerce, who was co-host with Saylor.

Toohey, who is also chairman of the National Council of Travel Industry Associations and chairman of the Special Travel Industry Council on Energy Conservation, spoke at the closing banquet September 10 with Lloyd Howe, administrator of the State of Idaho Division of Tourism and Industrial Development, a DATO Board of Directors member, and chairman of the Council of Regional Travel Executives, presiding.

Presiding at the opening banquet September 8 was Henry Demmons, Helena, Manager of Montana Travel Hosts.

Florence Clifford, Chairman of the Board of PNTA and owner of the Flamingo Motel, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, presided at the conference luncheon September 9, for a program on *Travel: Montana's Beautiful Industry* presented by Josephine Brooker, Director of The Montana Travel Promotion Unit, member of the DATO Board of Directors, and Regional Representative of the Council of Regional Travel Executives.

(Continued on Back Page)

MONTANA ATTENDS DATO TRAVEL MEET

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Designed to provide information exchanges for attraction and facility operators, tour wholesalers, travel agents, and other travel industry spokesmen, the travel meeting was attended by 1500 travel-related business representatives including 602 foreign delegates from 54 countries. The total attendance figure included 100 journalists from 16 countries, Brooker said.

Brooker and Pat Downs, Coordinator of the Tours Division of the Travel Unit, represented Montana at the meet along with Bozeman travel agency owner Bob Stevens and representatives of Glacier Park Company. Montana's only DATO members, the four attended the meeting to promote travel attractions and facilities in the Big Sky State.

Agents from a number of European, South American and Asian countries followed the DATO national powwow with a tour of some of Montana's vacation attractions.

Importance of the powwow to the travel industry was emphasized by William D. Toohey, President of DATO, who said, "This DATO meeting is one of the most successful of any of the business meetings held in the world today."

Underscoring Toohey's remarks was Secretary of Commerce Elliot L. Richardson, who said he regarded the powwow as "an outstanding example of public sector and private industry cooperation in strengthening international understanding and economic development."

Brooker commented that she was "very pleased with the interest expressed by overseas visitors — the interest in the Rocky Mountain West is intense."

REPRESENTING THE MONTANA TRAVEL INDUSTRY at the DATO Salt Lake City powwow were Josephine Brooker (L), Montana Travel Promotion Unit Director, and Pat Downs (R), Tours Coordinator of the Travel Unit, pictured with a foreign travel agent interested in Montana vacation attractions.

Covered Wagons Are Good Story

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As part of a continuing effort to attract national attention to Montana vacation assets, a story on the wagon train rides was written by the Travel Unit and sent on to national newspapers with an accompanying Travel Unit photograph of the wagon train on the buffalo refuge. The story was printed in newspapers across the nation.

A clipping service used by the Travel Unit to spot check publishing success has reported on the use of the story during the first two weeks following its release. With only partial returns counted, the wagon train story has appeared in such high-circulation newspapers as The New York *Sunday News,* The Los Angeles *Times,* The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* The Cleveland *Press,* and The Columbus *Sunday Dispatch.* The story also appeared in major newspapers in California, New Mexico, Illinois, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Washington, and Tennessee.

According to Josephine Brooker, Director of the Travel Promotion Unit, the operation was selected as a subject for Travel Unit release because "it has an appeal to a large number of vacationers, it takes advantage of the opportunity to blend travel publicity with the high degree of national interest in Montana history, and it is in an area where there are good vacation accommodations as well as things for people to see and do."

Ms. Brooker added, "Although the highest circulation on any story is always during the first few weeks after it is released, we know that most of the stories stay in use for as long as a year—and we expect this particular story to be attracting attention for a long time."

The story benefits the entire Flathead area, Ms. Brooker emphasized, as it contributes to the appeal of the entire area as a vacation destination.

"We expend a large percentage of our total efforts in publicizing the Flathead region," Ms. Brooker added, "as we feel it is one of Montana's finest vacation areas."

FOREIGN TRAVEL AGENTS participating in a post-DATO tour of Montana were among three separate tours of Montana travel attractions that presented the Big Sky State as a vacation destination to potential travelers in Europe, South America, Mexico and Japan.

Montana Attracts Foreign Travelers

Montana will be playing an increasingly prominent role as a vacation destination for travelers from abroad as a result of efforts by the Montana Travel Promotion Unit, according to Unit Director Josephine Brooker.

Three separate groups of foreign travel and publication representatives toured Montana during August and September, Ms. Brooker said.

In the first of the three tours a caravan of 25 trailers and about 80 persons, with journalists representing eight foreign countries, visited Montana on an itinerary that also included Washington, North Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, and Ohio. The group, made up of journalists, editors, reporters, press photographers, and radio and television producers and reporters from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, and Switzerland, traveled in Airstream trailers and automobiles provided by the Wally Byam Airstream organization.

The group stopped in St. Regis for a stay at the KOA campground, in Whitehall at the Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park, and at the 7 Z's KOA facility in Billings. Members of the tour expressed surprise at the friendliness of the people, low prices, the vast size of the landscape and its low population.

Lynne Albright of the Travel Promotion Unit was coordinator of the Montana portion of the tour, welcomed the group, and distributed press information about Montana.

In the second of the tours Montana played host to 10 photographers from six foreign countries as part of a *Wildlands, U.S.A.* familiarization tour sponsored by the United States Travel Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The participating newspaper, magazine and television photographers photographed extensively in Glacier National Park, with their work to be released in their own home countries to stimulate interest in traveling to the United States.

The group arrived in Kalispell for bus transfer to Lake McDonald Lodge in Glacier. The journalists rode horseback to Sperry Chalet, and spent the final part of their trip at Many Glacier Hotel. From Many Glacier they hiked to Ptarmigan and Iceberg Lakes.

Arrangements were made through Dick Monroe, Glacier National Park Management Assistant, and Glacier Park Company. Press and research information and "Montana —Big Sky Country" belt buckles were presented the group by the Montana Travel Promotion Unit. The Unit was represented by Garry Wunderwald, Travel Unit photographer.

In the third group, 15 travel agents representing 12 foreign countries toured vacation attractions in Montana following the annual Discover America Travel Organization (DATO) powwow in Salt Lake City.

Travel agents from Australia, Austria, Bermuda, Chili, England, Finland, France, Guatemala, Japan, New Zealand, Venezuela, and West Germany requested the opportunity to investigate Montana's travel attractions. The group arrived in West Yellowstone for a tour that included ranch and winter facilities at Big Sky, Bozeman, Missoula, the National Bison Range at Moiese, Flathead Lake, Kalispell, Glacier National Park, the Museum of the Plains Indian at Browning, and Great Falls.

Pat Downs, Coordinator of the Tours Division of the Travel Promotion Unit, worked with DATO representatives since January to coordinate the group tour. Transportation was arranged through participating airlines and ground transportation agencies in Montana, and food and lodging for the group was provided through cooperating host facilities in the state.

"This was our first foreign travel agent familiarization trip," Mrs. Downs commented, "and it is a beginning attempt to attract the lucrative foreign-traveler market to Montana,"

According to Brooker, a recent report from the United States Travel Service stated that international travel during the first quarter of 1976 was up considerably from previous years. Travel increased from all major geographic areas, with increases ranging from seven per cent from Asian visitors to 80.5 per cent for travelers from Central America. Travel also increased from major European markets, with a 39 per cent increase from the United Kingdom, a 64.5 per cent increase from West Germany, and a 38.9 per cent increase from France. Canadian travel to the USA increased 32.3 per cent during April alone, with arrivals of nearly 900,000.

Total arrivals from overseas countires during the first quarter neared the 1.1 million mark, a 13.2 per cent increase over the 1975 first-quarter total.

Campground News Is Good And Bad

Economic ups and downs have meant a mixed business trend for the campground industry, with good news well mixed with bad.

On the positive side of the ledger, the boom in recreational vehicle use has meant an increase in available publicly-owned campsites as well as improved revenues for the deluxe privately-owned campgrounds. Kampgrounds of America now has more than 820 camps in its chain that includes sites in Canada and Mexico. KOA has reported a healthy 20 per cent increase in volume, and Holiday Inn Trav-L-Parks also showed increases.

On the negative side, 300,000 campsites were lost last year as more than 500 privately-owned campgrounds fell to the gas pinch and recession. Trend evaluators have pointed out that the campsite victims were only marginal business operations, with fewer than one per cent of the missing campsites developed to sewer hookup categories.

According to the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, the 16 per cent business increase predicted for 1976 has now been revised to a 25 per cent increase, making the final word on campgrounds a very good indicator for future campground economic directions.

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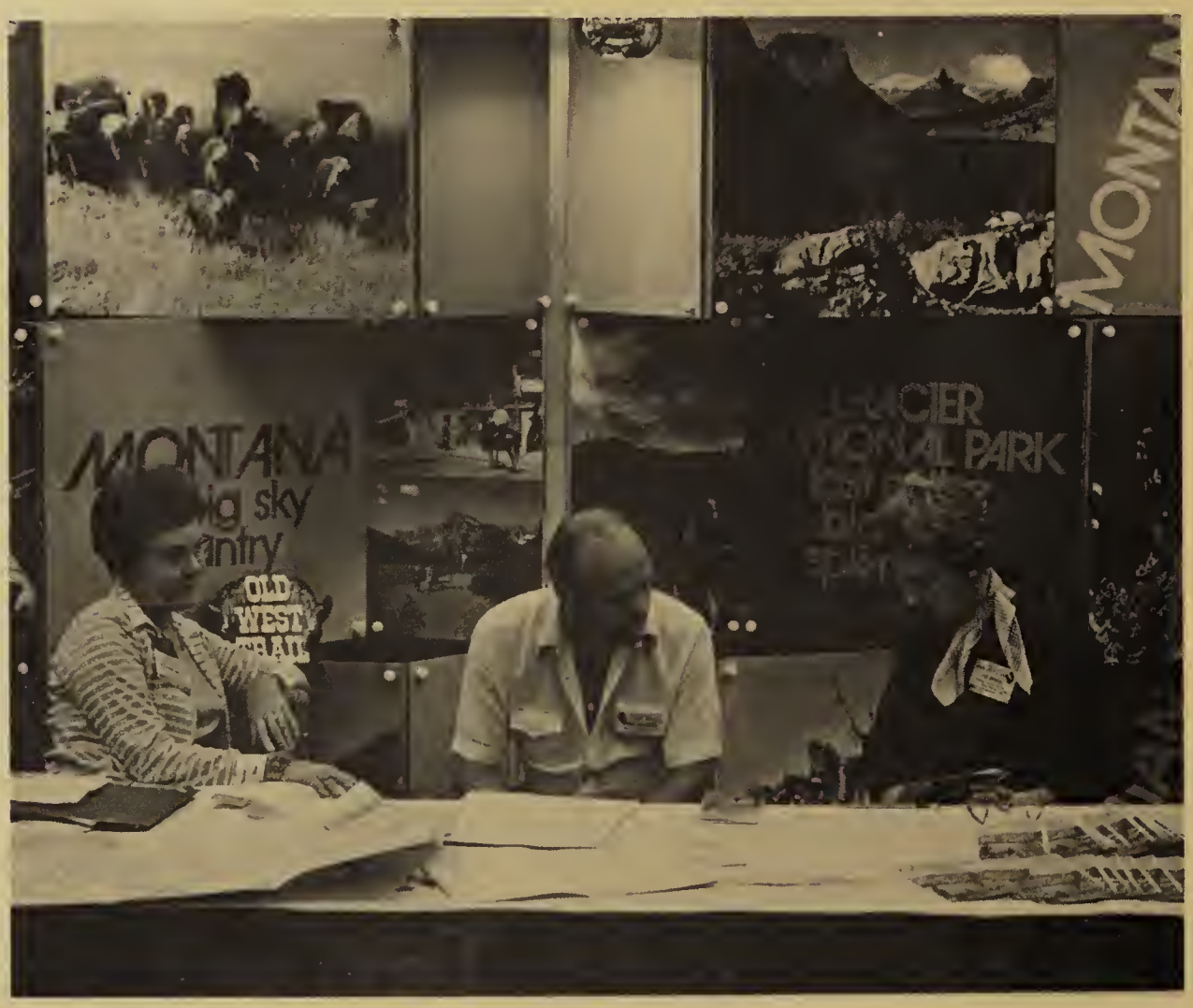

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An old steam train in all its puffing glory is now a traveler's treat as well as an attraction for Hollywood film locations, on the rails at White Sulphur Springs.

The Little Engine That Could . . . Did

White Sulphur Springs celebrated the 4th of July with a toot, some steam, and a train ride, according to Scott Warden, Coordinator of the Film Locations Division of the Montana Travel Promotion Unit.

The celebration also marked the official introduction of the Montana Central Railroad and Recreation Company, Inc., and The White Sulphur Springs and Yellowstone Park Railway Company, the companies that, with a steam-powered engine and two cars, took the population of the town on a 9-mile excursion ride halfway to Ringling.

King Willson, President of the Imperial Screen Co. of Lawndale, Calif., was the man behind the movement to get the engine and cars to the west-central Montana town. He purchased the 1920 Baldwin Prairie Class train a few months ago in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania for $50,000. Getting the engine (the Dry Gulch and Tombstone Railroad) to White Sulphur Springs was a five-day, $9,700 job, Warden said.

Willson considers his train a tourist attraction and hopes to establish a nostalgic train trip for travelers to the area.

Warden added that he expected the train to produce more than traveler interest and commented that "the train will be beneficial to the motion picture location efforts, as several large film producers have chosen other states for important film sites simply because Montana didn't have a steam train."

Montana Travel Is Big Business

Travel in Montana is big business for 1976, with visitor attendance up at all travel attraction attendance indicators and with phenominal increases in requests for travel information on the Big Sky State.

As of September 1, visitor attendance at the Custer Battlefield was up 26 per cent over the figure for the same date in 1975 for a rousing 243,184 total. At the Big Hole Battlefield near Wisdom the visitor total was up 15 per cent, while visitors to Big Horn Canyon Recreation Area were up nearly 10 per cent to 229,741.

At Glacier National Park, visitors through August totalled 1,396,162 for an 11 per cent increase over 1975, while Yellowstone National Park showed an increase to 2,840,220, or 9 per cent over last year. Hungry Horse Dam was up 16 per cent, and the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls indicated an increase of nearly 17 per cent. The World Museum of Mining in Butte was up 67 per cent for the largest visitor increase.

Inquiries on travel facilities and attractions in Montana increased over 76 per cent from 1975, primarily as a result of a series of ads launched last winter and spring in national media, and of Governor Tom Judge's "Invite a Friend to Montana" campaign in which, of the 14,500 invitations issued, 50 per cent actually visited Montana.

The Montana success story is reflected in a general travel upswing nationwide, according to a communication from the Discover America Travel Organization. In the DATO report, indications were that travel in the United States appears headed for a record year with 1976 being described by industry executives as an excellent year for domestic travel as a whole across the nation.

In summarizing the travel increases, figures from the United States Travel Data Center indicated increases in occupancy at hotels and motels throughout the country averaged five per cent. The Air Transport Association reported air traffic up 14 per cent over the first half of 1975, while car rental firms reported an impressive 40 per cent gain over 1975. Amtrak reported a five per cent gain, while the American Automobile Association reported that requests for trip routings were up 11 per cent in the first half of 1976 and that highway traffic volume was up eight per cent through March.

Media Campaign Benefits State Travel Industry

An estimated $20,000 to $30,000 in advertising time has benefited the entire Montana travel industry as a result of a public service promotion sponsored this summer by Montana Travel Hosts.

Participating radio and television stations throughout Montana donated public service time to a series of radio and television spot announcements that spelled out the benefits accruing to the state as a whole from the various aspects of the state's travel industry. In addition to promoting tourism as a viable contributor to the Montana economy, the public service campaign emphasized specific information on the influence of travel and tourism developments on community, regional, and state-wide levels.

New Superintendent At Bighorn Canyon

Homer L. Rouse became Superintendent of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area in Montana and Wyoming last July, succeeding Arthur L. Sullivan, Superintendent at Bighorn Canyon since December, 1970.

Rouse, 43, was Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Monument at Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., since June 1973 and assumed his new duties in August at the Fort Smith, Mt., headquarters for the Bighorn Canyon recreation development.

Sullivan, a National Park Service career employee since 1958, has been named Superintendent at Ozark National Scenic Riverways at Van Buren, Missouri.

MONTANA TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

published as a report on Montana's Tourist Industry

by

The Travel Promotion Unit, Department of Highways

Helena, Montana 59601
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Publicity Dept. Makes Big Gains

The travel promotion department which works to publicize Montana travel attractions in national media for the Montana Travel Promotion Unit has made big strides in its three years of operation, according to figures supplied the Travel Unit recently.

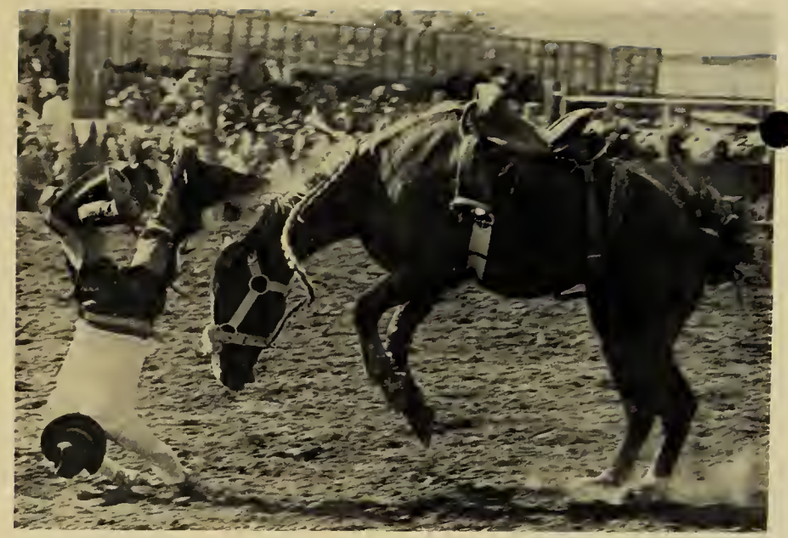
In October, 1974, after nearly a year's existence, a spot check of circulation totals indicated a circulation of 500,104 for a feature story written by the department and submitted to a nation-wide list of newspapers. In August, 1976, after nearly three years of operation, a similar spot check totalled 10,983,849 — an increase of nearly 2,100 per cent, or almost 21 times the total counted two years ago.

Travel Unit Director Josephine Brooker commented, "In addition to such a substantial circulation increase, our publicity stories are appearing in more important market areas and in major newspapers." The August circulation figure represents such prestigious newspapers as the New York *Sunday News,* The Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner,* The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* The Indianapolis *Star,* The Detroit *News,* and The Los Angeles *Times,* Ms. Brooker said.

Montana subjects covered in the August circulation figure included a covered wagon ride concession at the Moiese National Bison Range, backpacking in Montana, Glacier National Park, the Lewis and Clark Memorial at Fort Benton, the Custer Battlefield, the ghost town of Elkhorn, Virginia City, and an artist at Whitefish. Not included in the circulation figure was a three-photo feature of the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale accepted for national wire service release by United Press International.

"One of our biggest problems," Ms. Brooker added, "was to convince editors that they could trust us to send them good material. Travel writing has become so sophisticated and competetive that editors often won't even open envelopes from state travel promotion departments—expecting state material to be unpublishable."

The travel publicity department is provided by contract with Sage Advertising of Helena, and is staffed by one coordinator-writer and a secretary. The department works closely with Garry Wunderwald, photographer for the Travel Promotion Unit.



A HAPLESS COWBOY taking a spectacular spill was the subject of a three-photo feature of the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale that was accepted for nation-wide distribution by United Press International.

Montana Film Still Winning "Best" Awards

With an impressive collection of first-place awards already honoring its excellence, *Red Sunday,* a 28-minute color film on the Battle of the Little Bighorn, won still another accolade when it was judged "Best Historical Documentary" recently at the 19th Annual American Film Festival held at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York.

One of the top ten film festivals, the American Film Festival gave the Montana film the first place category award in extensive competition that included categories in art, culture, education and information, health, guidance, economy and society.

In previous competition the film was judged "Best Western Documentary" of the 16th Annual Wrangler Awards by the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, has won a CINE Golden Eagle, and a first-place award in the 8th Annual H. Werner Buck Travel Film Festival. It has also been selected as the orientation film at the Custer Battlefield National Monument, and has been seen by an estimated nine million viewers over television stations nationally.

The documentary was sponsored by the Montana Travel Promotion Unit cooperatively with the North Dakota Travel Division and the Bicentennial Administrations of both states. Produced by Bob Henkel of Sage Advertising, Helena, and Jim Graff, West Advertising, Billings, the film also involved cinematographer-director James Kelley, former Montanan now living in Toronto.

Travel Agents Visit Montana

A group of 25 travel agents from Southern California arrived in Great Falls in September for a tour of Big Sky State vacation attractions, according to Pat Downs, Tours Division Coordinator of the Montana Travel Promotion Unit.

After a welcoming luncheon sponsored by the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, the travel agents toured Glacier National Park, the Outlaw Inn in Kalispell, Big Sky of Montana, Virginia City and Nevada City. In a side trip, the group also visited the Copper King's mansion and the World Museum of Mining in Butte. The travel agents departed from Butte.

According to Mrs. Downs, this was the second such tour in 1976 for Montana and was coordinated in cooperation with Western Airlines, Frontier Airlines, and the participating host facilities.

The tours are designed to introduce Montana's vacation attractions to travel agents who will in turn promote Montana as a vacation destination to their clients.

PNTA MEET

(Continued from Page One)

During the three-day meeting a round table discussion on convention bureau operations was conducted by Eric Howard, manager of the Salem (Oregon) Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a workshop was held on promoting area tourism, moderated by John Blake, president of the Mid-Columbia Visitors Council, with Gene Magee, director of the Oregon Coast Association, speaking.

Also featured during the conference was a round table evaluation on *The Care and Feeding of Travel Writers* conducted by Lois McBride, Sage Advertising, Helena; a program on the problems and opportunities facing area and regional tourism organizations conducted by Bill S. Barnes, president of the Southern Travel Directors Council of Atlanta, Georgia; and a seminar on the problems of promoting smaller properties conducted by Don McKeehen, Cleveland and McKeehen Advertising, in Seattle.

The final day's luncheon speaker was Victor Fryer, Director of Tourism of the Oregon State Highway Division. An informational session on how to reach the potential of the Southern California market was presented by Howard H. Goetzman, assistant manager of the Touring Services Department of the Automobile Club of Southern California. Programs were also presented by Blake Smith, Travel InfoCentre, Portland, and Earl Sager, owner of Sager Mini Tours, Anaconda.

Hosts for the event were Diane McCorkle, manager of the Anaconda Chamber of Commerce, and Allan Saylor, manager of the Butte Chamber of Commerce.

A special feature of the PNTA conference were special tours to the Champion Sapphire Mine and to Butte for luncheon at the Copper King Mansion, both scheduled for spouses of participants and both conducted by Sager Tours.

PNTA was established in 1935 to promote the Pacific Northwest region, made up of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia. Treasurer and acting Executive Director of the organization is Lee Merrill, Steilacoom, Washington.

Bouquets Reward Travel Efforts

The offices of the Travel Promotion Unit in Helena have smelled like winner's roses lately, with bouquets of compliments in the form of appreciative letters.

A letter from an Indiana architect complimented the entire Livingston community in general and in particular personnel at the Delmar Motel, Nicholson's Restaurant, and the Conoco Service Station on West U.S. 10 for hospitality and service extended to travelers by the southern Montana city.

In addition, letters commending the new Montana 40-page vacation guide map booklet were received from numerous sources including Lakeside Mercantile, Inc., at Lakeside, Mt.; Lee Merrill, Executive Director of the Pacific Northwest Travel Association; the Grand Chapter of Montana, Order of Eastern Star; and Dr. Cortez F. Enloe, Editor/Publisher of Nutrition Today, a publication originating in Maryland.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING TRAVEL EVENTS

October 8-10
Seattle Ski Show

November 12-14
Minneapolis Ski Show

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